

it. It seems to be part of their very nature. They grow in stature; in intellectual strength and vigor; and alas, they grow in years also. But there is a tendency in children to grow old young; that is, grow abnormally. The fault lies with the parents. The triune nature of the child is not understood, and the natural consequence of this ignorance is, that there is a lack of harmony in the development of the several natures of the child. There is no uniform development of the triune being of the child. Every child has a body, a mind, and is a spirit. To develop any one part at the expense of the rest, is a violation of nature's law as well as of divine law. Manhood is one complete unity, so is childhood, and he who would educate in the true sense of the word must have respect to this trinity in unity which obtains in every child.

But you ask, what has all this to do with the question of keeping children young? Much in every way as you will see later. There are two periods in every one's life when he is proud of his age. The one is when quite young, and the other is when quite old. Ask the proud little boy who was seven years yesterday, the question, "How old are you?" "Seven, going on eight," will be the quick reply. Ask the aged man who has reached four score or more, what does he say? If he was eighty last week, he will tell you, "If I live till such and such a time I will be eighty-one years." He is proud of that record. He has a right to be. It means that he has triumphed in many a conflict, and has passed thro experiences which are as yet unreal to the ambitious young. But now inquire of the maiden who will be twenty-five to-morrow, and if you get an answer at all it will be, "Twenty-four."

Time was when a boy was supposed to pass the transitional period from youth to young manhood, at about 20, or at least 18, and girls at about the same age. But now the boys and girls come to that period of transition at 12, some even at 10 years of age. It is perfectly amusing to hear girls of 12, 13 and 14 talk about their beaux, discuss questions intended for women of maturer years, and actually quarrel like crabbed old maids about their intended lovers. Imagine a girl of 12, 14 or 15 weeping as tho her heart would break because her "feller" has gone to war. As tho she really loved him! At her age she has not the least idea as to what love is; love, the apostle declares, never fails, but this something which you call love, is at a fever heat one day, and the next, cold as an iceberg, frozen up. I have never yet been able to analyze that something which these boys and girls call love. It is a mixture of a nameless something and nothing in an unknown proportion.

It is truly remarkable of what vast ambitions boys and girls of from ten to fifteen years are capable. We need but take a stroll out thro the town on any evening of the week to witness the wondrous spectacle of boys and girls promenading the streets with locked arms, boys in knee pants and girls in short

dress, children they ought to be, out at hours of the night when they ought to be at home learning the sweet and beautiful lessons of domestic life from mother, and receiving instructions from father. It is not amusing either, it is sad, sad indeed to see these children, for such they are, engage in conversation which would bring the blush of shame on pure men and women, carrying obscene pictures and exhibiting them to one another, reading indecent literature, sowing the germs of spiritual and moral death and in every way developing that lust which when it has conceived bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death. But the physical is subjected to no better treatment. You want to be men and women, but you are doing the very thing which will leave you helpless as a child at the very time when you ought to have reached the flower of womanhood and the full fruition of manhood. It is doubtful whether there are five boys in this town who do not smoke cigarettes or cigars or both. And what is worse the girls are doing the same thing. It is an alarming statement to make, but it is true and we might as well face the facts. Who is to blame for this state of affairs? The responsibility rests with the parents of the children, who allow these boys and girls to run the streets, spend evening hours away from home, who are eager to have their children men and women socially, when they are babes physically and mentally. Make men and women of your children before they are such, and they will be children when they ought to be men and women. Do parents teach their children the injurious effects of cigarette smoking? Do these boys and girls know that they are gradually undermining the very foundation of health, wasting their energy, clouding their faculties, and burning up their vitality, both physically and mentally? If they do not know, then some one is guilty of criminal negligence, and such guilt can rest upon one only, that one the parent of the child, probably indirectly the teacher under whose instruction the child is. It is doubtful whether there is a boy in this country, who has smoked cigarettes for one year, now enjoying good health. It cannot be. The foundation of health is gone. The bright intelligent look has disappeared from the face, the complexion is ruined, and in appearance he is twenty-five, but in years, in mental power and vigor, he is yet a child of ten, and never will be much more unless he extinguishes the fire burning in his body and soul. What will be the nature of the generation we are rearing? A puny, sickly, helpless people. Today we can lick Spain, but in a generation hence we will have a nation of cigarette smokers who cannot, even if there were a Spain to lick.

I say this earnestly, and not as a joke, for it is truth. One of the most reliable daily papers in the country makes public the startling statement, that ninety per cent of cigarette smokers fail to pass the physical examinations for the army. It is a question with the authorities at Washington, whether a

young man makes a desirable soldier, who indulges in the ruinous habit of smoking cigarettes. He who has not backbone enough to rise up and fling defiance at his appetite, is not made of the kind of material required for a United States soldier. And it becomes a fair question, and a serious one, whether the young man who persists in the cigarette habit can be rated very high in a mental examination.

Fellow teachers, here is an opportunity for reform in which you must act an important part. Teach the young by example and precept. There is but one standard of morality for the preacher and the teacher. I would as soon think of sending my child to a church whose Sunday-school superintendent and minister smoked cigarettes, attended public dances, played cards, drank wine and gambled, as to send him to a teacher who indulges in these unnatural and injurious habits.

There is in our boys and girls a vain ambition to be men and women before they have passed the transitional period from youth to manhood. Indeed there is the absurd idea that this period has been abolished, and that children now become men without passing thro that happiest, that most delightful of all experiences, the period of their boyhood and youth. Thus it is that our children are robbed of that most valuable experience which is a necessary part of every child's schooling and discipline. The two critical periods of one's life are the transition from childhood into youth and from youth into manhood. It is here where the young life needs your closest attention, your greatest care. If the child makes these transitions in safety, without forming any bad habits, its foundation for future life is fairly well laid. But here is the critical period, and the more so because for some reason, in this fast age, that period is forced upon the child five years too early. Especially is this true of the transition from youth to manhood. In this matter I have had a little personal experience. I well remember when I passed my 13th year; one year more, I said, and I will be a man. To me it was an event worthy of celebration, and some preparation for it was made. I felt like the little boy of six who stands up and boldly declares, "I reads." The day came. I was staying in a little village working for my brother. But there was no celebration; nobody seemed to be informed of the great event that had just transpired, and it is well that the outside world did not know what was going on in that inside world, in my mind. I was thinking great things, I thought I was; they were great to me. At noon I entered the country store, bought a cigar, lit it, proudly walked down street puffing away at it. It was a great day in my life—greater than I knew. Going along I met the store keeper's son, the man who was afterwards a faithful deacon in my church, thank God for that man. As I passed him, he said, "You are a pretty looking feller with that cigar in your mouth." It was too much for my pride; my whole nature rose up in revolt, the spirit of manhood,